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AUTHENTICK

MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE

Of the celebrated Actress

Mrs. *Anne Oldfield.*

CONTAINING

A Genuine Account of her Transactions from her Infancy to the Time of her Decease.

See here the Fair One, whose engaging Art,
Cou'd charm each Ear, and captivate each Heart.

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AUTHENTICK MEMOIRS, &c.

THE Lives of celebrated Comedians have always been receiv'd as an agreeable Amuſement by the Publick; wherefore it is to be hoped, that the following Account of an inimitable Actreſs, who has a long Series of Time maintain'd an inconteſtable Superiority over all her Contemporaries, and been the univerſal Delight of the Beau Monde, will meet with as favourable Quarter from the Town, as either the facetious Mr. Spiller's, or Honeſt Penkethman's of merry Moment.

Her Talent for genteel Comedy was, I believe, never ſurpaſſed, if equalled by any One; and whoever has ſeen her Act *Andromache*, or the *Diſtreſſed Mother*, muſt allow ſhe was an excellent Tragedian.

Her

Her Perſon was infinitely Graceſull, her Nature Majeſtick, her Behaviour ſo inchanting, and her Converſation ſo agreeable, that during her whole Life ſhe was in the higheſt Eſteem with Perſons of the greateſt Rank.

In private Capacity ſhe was a Woman of uncommon Generoſity and good Nature; ſo that ſhe never ſent away diſſatisfy'd any unfortunate Perſon who ever apply'd to her for any Favour, eſpecially if they were endu'd with a liberal Education.

But as in the Writing of her Life we muſt begin before her appearance upon the Stage, we ſhall endeavour to give the World the moſt authentick Memoirs that could poſſibly be procured of the moſt material Occurrences that ever happen'd to her from her Infancy.

As various have been the Scenes thro' which ſhe paſs'd, before ſhe acquir'd that eſtabliſh'd Character to which ſhe at laſt arriv'd, we flatter our ſelves the Readers will find it an acceptable Entertainment; the more, inaſmuch as we ſhall adhere ſtrictly to matters of Fact, and not interſperſe this Work with a heap of fictitious and Inconſiſtances; as is too often done in Productions of this Nature.

We ſhall therefore ſpare neither Coſt nor Pains to render our Memoirs compleat; and hope accordingly they will meet with better En-

Encouragement than thoſe ſpurious Accounts which never fail being Trump'd up on the like Occaſions, and are ſure to accompany the Deaths of any eminent Perſons.

Wherefore as we don't ſuppoſe Mrs. *Oldfield*'s Memory will meet with any better Uſage from theſe Gentry than others who have gone before her; we will endeavour to reſcue her from their Clutches, and her into ſuch a Dreſs as may fit her once more to appear in, and be the Delight of the beſt Company.

Not that we ſhall pretend to ſet her off to ſo great Advantage as ſhe appear'd when ſhe Charm'd the Eyes and Ears of all Beholders; that is a Task to which we confeſs our ſelves not equal. However we will take care to ſtrip her of as few of her native Beauties as poſſible; and tho' the Picture does not come up to the Original we will at leaſt not fail to make it a tolerable Copy.

Juſt as I Propheſy'd, I have now ſeen an Advertiſement, deſiring Hints to be ſent unto *Hurt*'s Coffee Houſe in the *Strand*, to one *William Egerton*, who no doubt will pack together a groſs Collection of Abſurdities, and Palm them upon the Town for Hints ſent by Perſons of Credit and Reputation.

This ſame *William Egerton* being only a fictitious Name to cover ſome wretched and Blind Author

Author, who is afraid to ſet his real one, for fear his Character ſhould damn his Performance.

To ſhew I am not miſtaken in what the Town is to expect from Mr *Egerton*, and to give a ſpecimen of his Performance in this Advertiſement, he has not ſo much as been able to Spell her Name right, or had Credit enough with any One to ſet him right in ſo trivial a Circumſtance, for nothing is more certain, than that ſhe always wrote it *Ann* without an *E*, whereof he might have informed himſelf, had he but Intereſt enough to procure the ſight of one Letter or Receipt under her Hand.

To begin then: Her Grand-Father who was Born of very honeſt Parents, who was put Apprentice to a Vintner; and in that Station always behaved himſelf in ſuch a Manner, as gain'd both the Approbation and good Will of his Maſter and was very obliging to all his Cuſtomers.

He had not long been out of his Time before he ſet up for himſelf, and took the *George Tavern*, now an Ale-Houſe, againſt the *Cocoa Tree* in *Pall Mall*, where his Behaviour was ſo engaging and his Uſage ſo good, that he quickly drew Crouds of the beſt Company, and conſequently was not long before (to uſe a common Expreſſion) he got the Forehorſe by the Head, and throve amain.

Accordingly

Accordingly, he not only bought the House whe e he lived but two more adjoining to it, and entirely rebuilt them from the Ground.

As he lived long enough after wards to gain a very handsome Fortune, besides this Estate, by his Business, and had but two Sons living, thinking the Eldest would be otherwise well enough provided for, he, at his Decease, left these three worth then between Sixty and Seventy Pounds per Annum, to his youngest Son, who was the Father of our celebrated Heroine.

This Gentleman being, as may be imagin'd, of not altogether so Parsimonious and lucrative a Temper as his deceas'd Father, did not enjoy this Estate long, before he first mortgaged and after sold it outright to his elder Brother.

Accordingly it is now in the Possession of his elder Brother's Son, Mr. *George Oldfield* a Hosier in St *James's Street*, near St *James's* Gate, who is first Cousin to Mrs. *Oldfield*. After the Sale of this Estate, her Father being willing, as 'tis supposed, to put himself in some way of Living with the Money, he bought towards the Reign of the late King *James's* Reign, into the Horse Guards, and continued in that Post till the Day of his Death, which happened not a great many Years after.

After

After his Deceaſe, his Family not being left in a very flouriſhing Condition, his eldeſt Brother abovemention'd, took Compaſſion on the Girl, and reſolved to give her ſome Education. To this purpoſe he put her to School, where ſhe ſoon took her Learning with admirable Proficiency, and did in Time made great Progreſs, in all the Accompliſhments ſuitable to her Sex. But ſhe had not been long there before ſhe diſcover'd ſuch an invincible Inclination to become an Actreſs upon the Stage, that all Perſuaſions, Admonitions, or even Threatnings of her Parents and Friends cou'd deter her from it.

Her firſt Appearance upon the Stage, was about thirty Years ago, at the King's Theatre in the *Hay* Market, which has ſince been ſet a part wholly for the Uſe of Opera's, Maſquerades, and ſuch like elegant Entertainments, as of the famous Swiſs Count's providing.

About twenty ſeven Years ago Mr. Rich found means to prevail on Mrs. Oldfield to leave the Hay-Market, and come to the Theatre in Drury-Lane, wherein he then was concerne'd accordingly ſhe did ſo; and whoever happened to be proprietors of that houſe after Mr. Rich, ſhe could not be perſuaded to quit it, but here ſhe continued conſtant to her laſt. During

During her Illneſs, ſhe was frequently attended by the moſt eminent Phyſitians, but finding their Attendants to no Purpoſe, ſhe began in earneſt to prepare for her Death like a true Chriſtian moſt Women in her Condition would have done as much, few wou'd have done better and many would have done much worſe. However, after having lain in the greateſt Torments, ſhe died an examplary Penitent on Friday the 23d of October, about two o' Clock i the Morning, in the 47 Year of her Age.

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FINIS.